

EDITION 1-25

SPANNER NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE RAEME ASSOCIATION QUEENSLAND

JULY 2025



FEATURING THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED 16th AVIATION
SUPPORT BATTALION TOWNSVILLE



Edition 2-25

31 July 25



Spanner News

Published three times per year, "Spanner News" is the Official Newsletter of the RAEME Association Queensland Inc



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Bracken Ridge Qld

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

We're already past the halfway point of the year, and what a terrific start it's been. Across Queensland, member engagement has been outstanding, with successful events already delivered and many more to come. A full calendar lies ahead, and I encourage all members to keep supporting their local regions and staying connected with their RAEME community by getting involved.

As we look ahead, we also acknowledge those currently deployed. Our RAEME Corps members supporting Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025 are delivering vital technical support to Australian and coalition forces. Their contribution highlights the essential role our tradesmen and women play in maintaining operational readiness during Australia's largest multinational military exercise.

In parallel, the Association continues its global support through Operation Spanner Pack, providing care packages to RAEME maintenance teams, training detachments, and individuals embedded on overseas operations. Already this year, Spanner Packs have reached members serving in PNG, Fiji, on Operation Sovereign Borders, and with AACAP in the Torres Strait Islands.

Back home, ANZAC Day 2025 was especially memorable. Record numbers of RAEME veterans and serving members participated in commemorations across Queensland and beyond. Brisbane and Townsville saw particularly strong turnouts, reflecting the enduring esprit de corps that binds us. We were also honoured to support a commemorative event hosted by our sister organisation in Darwin's CBD. A special mention goes to ASEME and Brisbane TTMO, Tim Cutting, for coordinating the OJTs who proudly carried our banner in the Brisbane march, a powerful symbol of Corps unity.

Building on this spirit of service, this edition introduces the RAQ Community Service Fund, a new initiative launched this year to support projects aligned with our values. I'm pleased to announce our first project, the sponsorship of a new defibrillator for the Mermaid Beach AEME Surf Life Saving Club. This device will be a vital resource for both the club and the local community, and we're proud to contribute to such an important cause.

Looking to the future, the Editor of Spanner News, explains in his column how the RAEME National Network (RNN) is seeking advice on whether there is support for a RNN newsletter with a national focus – more to follow on this initiative, led by Ian Cook, the secretary of the RA ACT.

For our Queensland members, regular updates will continue across multiple platforms, including weekly comms and our social media channels, ensuring you stay informed about Corps news and upcoming events statewide.

Finally, next month marks a solemn occasion, as we pause to remember WO2 Ryan Leslie and Craftsman Brendon Payne, who tragically lost their lives on 30 August 2021 during a military exercise near Townsville. The annual commemorations at the accident site are a moving reminder of their sacrifice and the strength of our Corps family. Arte et Marte Rest in Peace.

Thank you for your ongoing support and all you do to strengthen our RAEME community.

Arte et Marte

Peter Matthews
Chairman RAQ

chairman@qld.raeme.org.au



MESSAGE FROM COL COMDT QLD – COL PIERS CAMBRIDGE CSM



In early April, I had the pleasure of visiting 106 Fd Wksp where the OC conducted a promotion and presented a number of awards. It was a pleasure to meet with the soldiers over a hamburger lunch. It's clear that the unit is very busy and that tempo is still very high. That was quickly followed with the first RAEME Association – Sunshine Chapter lunch at the Alex Surf Club. It was a great gathering of RAEME folk who have retired or live on the Sunshine Coast. It's always a pleasure to find old colleagues and re-connect. Well done to the organising crew.

Looking forward it is my intent to get to Townsville later in the year to attend a Spanner Club and potentially visit some of the RAEME Soldiers at the Units. I plan to start engaging with people in the coming months – so stand by for some dates.

From a Corps perspective the nominations period for Craftsmen of Year awards (ARA and GRES) will soon be upon us – I would ask that our Corps Leaders start thinking about nominating worthy candidates. The detail is contained within Corps Instruction 22 – but to summarise key dates:

- The award is judged for the period 01 Aug – 31 Jul.
- Units should nominate worthy individuals using the Inst 22 Nomination Form and send those nominations to the Regional RAEME Representative by end of August.
- The Regional RAEME Representative will then convene a regional selection committee where the nominations will be evaluated.

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- Nominations for National Awards will be subsequently sent to Head of Corps for announcement in late Sep/early Oct.

Please continue to support RAQ activities and events. I generally get to the monthly meetings and watch how passionate and committed the committee (and others) are to supporting both current and retired RAEME people. The RAQ plays an important role – please encourage other RAEME folk who may not yet be members to join. It's important that we remain connected and support each other.

In closing I am willing and available to support unit functions, so please reach out if I can be of assistance!

Kind regards,

Piers Cambridge
Colonel Commandant RAEME QLD
pkccam@icloud.com

KINGS BIRTHDAY HONOURS

Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Military Division.

Warrant Officer Class One Tony Croft. For meritorious service in support of Australian Army Aviation.



WO1 Tony Croft has been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (Military Division) for meritorious service in support of Australian Army Aviation. Over a remarkable career spanning more than 40 years, WO1 Croft has delivered exceptional service in technical, maintenance and sustainment roles. His leadership, deep technical knowledge and unwavering professionalism have been instrumental in enhancing the operational effectiveness of Army Aviation's rotary and fixed wing assets.

Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the General Division.

Major David Bernard Melandri (Rtd), Highfields QLD. For service to veterans and their families, and to the community of Toowoomba.



Major David Melandri (Rtd), of Highfields QLD, has been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (General Division) for service to veterans and their families, and to the Toowoomba community. A RAEME veteran who served from 1966 to 2004, Major Melandri has continued to serve long after his military career ended, notably through Toowoomba Legacy and the Salvation Army. His leadership across multiple terms as Legacy President, and his ongoing roles as pensions officer, youth mentor and community volunteer exemplify selfless service.

Conspicuous Service Cross (CSC) Australian Army.

Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Anthony King. For outstanding achievement as the Staff Officer Grade One Sustainment, Army Headquarters.



Lieutenant Colonel Daniel King has been awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross for outstanding achievement as the Staff Officer Grade One Sustainment at Army Headquarters. His leadership, initiative and strategic insight have had a profound impact on Army's sustainment capability. LTCOL King's work addressing funding challenges and improving Defence-wide governance has strengthened Army's operational readiness.

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Lieutenant Colonel Cunningham. For outstanding achievement as the UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter acquisition Project Manager.



Lieutenant Colonel Cunningham applied outstanding leadership, project management and stakeholder engagement to deliver an initial UH-60M Black Hawk capability on an unprecedented schedule. He enabled rapid approvals of the project and ensured a robust support system for aircraft operations. Lieutenant Colonel Cunningham established essential relationships within the United States Army and Security Assistance and Australian Defence Industry. His efforts have directly enhanced Army Aviation and utility helicopter response options for Australia.

Commendation for Distinguished Service Australian Army.

Warrant Officer Class Two Andrew John Harvey.



WO2 Andrew Harvey has been awarded a Commendation for Distinguished Service for his actions during warlike operations as a CH-47D Chinook Aircrewman Technician with Task Group 633.7 on Operation SLIPPER. During the tragic crash of Chinook A15-102 on 30 May 2011, WO2 Harvey demonstrated extraordinary courage and leadership, risking his life to assist his comrades. His actions reflect the highest traditions of the Australian Army and of our Corps.

FAREWELL TO SO2 CORPS, MAJ STEPHEN JOHN HOWELLS

For those not familiar with MAJ Steve Howells, he has been the glue that has held the Head of Corps Cell together for a number of years. He undertook numerous roles, SO2 Corps Heritage, Treasurer, Secretary of the RAEME Corps Committee (RCC).



A younger version of MAJ Steve Howells

MAJ Howells is wrapping up his career in July. He will be formally dined out to recognise his long and distinguished service. MAJ Howells enlisted on 17 Jan 1973 as a 28th Intake apprentice electronic tradesman. His first posting as a Radio Mechanic was to 101 Field Workshops and whilst there attended RAEME Training Centre to complete a RADAR Introduction Course. Successful completion of this course resulted in Steve being sent to the UKs School of Electronic Engineering to complete the RAPIER ground to air missile repair course.

In 1983 he was posted back to the Army Apprentice School as a Trade Instructor, when the school relocated to Bonegilla and promoted to Sergeant. 1986 he was posted to the School of Artillery, Manly, promoted to Staff Sergeant and completed the first Australian Course in the maintenance of the AN/TPQ-36 Weapon Locating Radar.

In 1988 he was posted to the Directorate of Capital Procurement Melbourne and promoted to Warrant Officer Class Two. This was then followed by a posting to 131 Div Loc Bty, in 1992 as the ASM and promotion to Warrant Officer Class One. Later he was posted to RAEME Training Centre as the Senior Instructor Radar & Guide Weapons Section and later as the Operations Warrant Officer. 1996 saw a posting to the Proof and Experimental Establishment, Port Wakefield as the Instrumentation Officer and in 1999 posted to the Simulation Cell of Support Command.

Then in 2001 (after 10 years as a WO1) he applied for a transfer to the dark side, was commissioned by BRIG Dave McGahey and posted to the Directorate of Technical Regulation Army, as a Captain. In 2004 he was posted to HQ 7 Bde as SO3 EME and then in 2005 after a six-month

Operational deployment to IRAQ, returned to HQ 7 Bde as the SO3 Log Ops. Steve then deployed again in 2010 as the 2IC of the CSS mentoring team with MTF-1 to Afghanistan.

Steve has been awarded the Australian Active Service Medal, with clasps ICAT and IRAQ. The Afghanistan and Iraq medals, the Defence Long Service Medal, with seven clasps (3 Federation Stars). The Australian Defence Medal and the NATO Medal with the ISAF clasp. He has also been presented a Meritorious Unit Citation, the Army Combat Badge and the Return from Active Service Badge.

MAJ HOWELLS AWARDED HIS THIRD FEDERATION STAR



MAJ Steve Howells presented with a Corps painting on achieving his 3rd Fed Star in acknowledgment of 50 years of dedicated service

ASM-LAND – SOMETHING TO ASPIRE TO!

For those not aware, WO1 Marc Craigie has been announced as the replacement for WO1 Andrew Beaman as our latest Tier C Warrant Officer in the position of ASM-Land. This is an important appointment that is well deserved – this is a career for all young soldiers to aspire to. Here is a summary.



“Warrant Officer Class One Marc Craigie hails from South Australia and enlisted into the Army on 16 January 1991 as a 46th Intake Army Apprentice Vehicle Mechanic. After completing his apprenticeship, Warrant Officer Craigie was allocated to the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and served at the rank of Craftsman and Corporal in the 1st Brigade within Engineer and Armoured Regiments.

“He progressed through technical appointments as a Sergeant and Warrant Officer Class Two across the Regular Army, Army Reserve, and the Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group (CASG). At the rank of Warrant Officer Class One he has held Artificer Sergeant Major (ASM) appointments at the 1st Signal Regiment and Headquarters 7th Brigade.

“Warrant Officer Craigie’s Staff appointments include the 1st Division and Deployable Joint Force Headquarters, and the Directorate of Soldier Career Management – Army where he served as Career Adviser for Employment Category Number 229 Vehicle Technicians. Warrant Officer Craigie was privileged to hold the appointment of Master Artificer for Employment Category Number 229 Vehicle Technicians from January 2023 to December 2024. This is a role that he found profoundly rewarding and humbling.

“In January 2025, Warrant Officer Craigie commenced a 12-month secondment to BHP. The secondment provides exposure to inclusive, diverse and successful leadership and management practices within the private sector and supports a mutual exchange of ideas, knowledge and experience between Army and BHP.

“Operationally, Warrant Officer Craigie has deployed on Operation CATALYST to Iraq in 2005 and Operation HIGHROAD to Afghanistan in 2017, as the Artificer Sergeant Major for Task Group Afghanistan.

“Warrant Officer Class One Craigie holds an Advanced Diploma of Mechanical Engineering and is registered with Engineers Australia as an Engineering Associate Fellow of the Institution of Engineers Australia and a Chartered Engineering Associate.

“Warrant Officer Craigie is married to Joanne and they have two sons, Sam (21) and Alex (18). He is an avid supporter of Carlton Football Club and works as a community volunteer at his sons local Australian Rules Football Club. In his spare time, he enjoys playing golf, fishing, and spending time with his family and their Labrador ‘Lenny’.”

The RAQ congratulates WO1 Craigie on his new appointment and his career to date.

For the outgoing ASM-LAND, WO1 Jim Beaman, the RSM of the Corps, WO1 Jon Tynan, wrote the following tribute. *“As the inaugural ASM-Land, thank you for your guidance, mentorship and candid conversations (at times about the Regimental Sergeant Majors). You have focussed on the establishment of the position as a trusted Senior Enlisted Advisor, which has proven to be invaluable to*

the Corps and maintainers across all Army’s land platforms and equipment”.

For readers who are unfamiliar with the tiered system of WOIs, this is something Defence introduced in recent years to note the increased significance of some WOI positions and the value they bring to the Army. In general, the tier system includes the following levels:

- **Tier A.** Applies to positions involving direct application of trade skills or entry level Regimental Sergeant Major (all corps) or Warrant Officer disciplinary positions at, or higher than, the relevant at a Unit level.
- **Tier B.** Applies to positions involving application of managerial skills (applied with or without reference to trade knowledge) at, or higher than, the relevant of the Formation level.
- **Tier C.** This highest level, applies to positions involving high level management and representational duties, applied generally at a functional or environmental command level.

Editor’s Note. To date, RAEME has had three WOs appointed to Tier C. Apart from WO1 Beaman and WO1 Craigie, WO1 Bradley Bargaenquast OAM was appointed in Dec 24.

FEATURE ARTICLE – AVN SPT BN – A NEW UNIT ON THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY’S ORBAT

Introduction. The establishment of the 16th Aviation Support Battalion (16 ASB) in Townsville and Oakey represents a significant shift towards centralised Army Aviation support within the ADF. The Battalion consolidates governance, maintenance, refuelling, rearming, and logistics functions, previously distributed across the 1st Aviation Regiment (1 AVN REGT) and 5th Aviation Regiment (5 AVN REGT), into a single unit. This centralisation allows the Aviation Regiments to focus more on flying, planning and preparedness.

The context of the ASB. Army Aviation is currently undergoing a period of significant modernisation. This is largely characterised by the delivery of UH-60M Blackhawk and AH-64E Apache helicopters, however, also includes the growth of the CH-47F Chinook fleet and Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS). Collectively this represents a significant uplift in Army Aviation capacity, that required consideration of underlying sustainment and operating models. In response, Aviation Command (AVNCOMD) underwent an organisational capability review, which led to the establishment of the 16 ASB.

The new Battalion coordinates military and embedded industry technicians, logisticians and groundcrew within the Oakey and Townsville area in support of UH-60M, AH-64E and CH-47F operations. 16 ASB comprises of members from the Australian Army, Royal Australian Air



LAC Malbin Johnson is part of the team

Force, Australian Public Service and Defence Industry. 16 ASB will drive improvements in military rotary wing Maintenance, Repair, Overhaul and Upgrade (MRO&U), supply chain management, and Combat Service Support (CSS) to an aviation dependency. Within the 16th Aviation Brigade, 16 ASB will work closely with the Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group (CASG) and Defence Industry partners.



Lockheed Martin Australian tradie who is also part of the team

ASB Connection with Army Aviation Units. The co-location of the new Battalion with 1 AVN REGT and 5 AVN REGT in Townsville complements integral regiment assets with centralised logistics and maintenance services. This posture and relationship will meet the requirements of Army Aviation into the future by leveraging the benefits of mass and density, geographical advantage, and an aviation centre of excellence model. The benefits of centralisation in

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Townsville are designed to be weighed against the need for autonomy and will continue to be refined over time. This footing allows a deliberately measured balance of capability generation and management for AVNCOMD. Support to the School of Army Aviation in Oakey is provided through the provision of maintenance support on the UH-60M. It is important to note that 6 AVN REGT and 20 REGT are not directly enabled by the ASB, as they retain their organic CSS element.

The challenge facing the ASB maintenance capability. Realising the full potential and benefits of 16 ASB is going to rely on a mindset shift across the entirety of the Army Aviation community, away from the long-standing.



towards a new:



The key shift in thinking required for the effective employment of the ASB model is to resist a natural tendency to employ the ASB as a “big, centralised TSS” that can respond at short notice to rapidly evolving operational priorities. The “big, centralised TSS” approach would diminish the true capability of the ASB and impact the unit’s ability to establish a long term, stable and predictable “production line” of deeper maintenance. At maturity, the ASB will operate 24/7 across three shifts, which will enable the Battalion to produce greater maintenance and logistics support than the previous model. The increase in support is in part through the CASG and Defence Industry delivered integrated nature of contractor maintenance. Initiatives to integrate and authorise RAAF, foreign partner and reserve technicians to a greater extent than in the past complement the integrated model. This inclusive team will be collectively responsive as a single entity to the Commander’s Main Effort. The tactical and operational agility in deployed operations will be generated by force assigning task organised capabilities to the Aviation Battle Group.

Our Connection with History. The 9th Advanced Ordnance Workshop was raised in July 1942 at Bushmead, Western Australia. In February 1944, it merged with the 5th Tank Workshop Company and the 4th Ordnance Tank Depot Workshop Section to become the 5th Australian Base Workshop. By January 1945, with troop numbers in the region decreasing, the

unit was scaled back and renamed the 5th Australian Advanced Workshop. The unit continued to operate in Nungarin until the end of the war.

In 1972, at the conclusion of the Vietnam War, the 1 AVN REGT Workshop was re-organised as the 5th Base Workshop Battalion (5 WKSP BN) and moved to Oakey in 1973. In 1989, 5 WKSP BN was redesignated as the Oakey Workshop Battalion, and again in 1993 as the Oakey Logistic Battalion. Three years later it was renamed the Aviation Support Group Workshop (ASGW). Over the next two decades the workshop provided operational level support to the School of Army Aviation and some deeper level maintenance for the rest of the Army Aviation fleets. ASGW was officially closed in 2007 and outsourced commercial support for maintenance and training was introduced.

This year, in a nod to the past, the 5th Base Workshop Company (5 WKSP COY), was raised as part of the 16th Aviation Support Battalion (16 ASB). Today, 5 WKSP COY at Oakey maintains the UH-60M and provides direct support to the School of Army Aviation. In Townsville, 5 WKSP COY provides deeper maintenance on the CH-47F fleet and supports 1 AVN REGT with the delivery of the AH-64E. 16 ASB's culture and service ethos is drawn from the best parts of our history and we acknowledge the giants who have gone before us.

Army Aviation has a strong history and relationship with Defence Industry, with our platform prime partners being Airbus Australia Pacific, Boeing Defence Australia and Lockheed Martin Australia.



The other part of the team – in uniform

Conclusion. The evolving strategic landscape necessitates a re-focused approach to aviation support, directly responsive to the Commander's Main Effort. Aviation Command has commenced the development of an Aviation Support Battalion that is agile, industry-integrated, and capable of sustaining high-readiness aviation operations in diverse environments. Inheriting a rich history of support to the nation, 16 Aviation Support

Battalion's establishment will ensure that Army Aviation remains a formidable force, prepared to meet future challenges with confidence.

Chris Porada
LTCOL
CO 16 ASB



Ed Note: More changes to the army aviation capability can be [sourced at this link](#).

WHAT IS 6ESR UP TO LATELY.

6 ESR is the divisional engineering unit responsible for mobility support, force protection and lines of communication bridging in the context of Exercise Talisman Sabre 25. The unit's logistics squadron is focused on the development of a Divisional Engineer Park. This is a concept that has not been effectively practiced since WW2 and involves the development of a logistical hub where specific engineering stores are consolidation and pushed forward to appropriate teams on the ground. The DIV ENGR park also co-ordinates the RAEME FRT that is attached to the construction squadron in the field.



OC OSS 6ESR, MAJ Kyle Ferguson, promoted Recovery Technician LCPL Ekblad to CPL between recovery tasks on Ex Talisman Sabre

The "Crafties" can always expect challenging repair and recovery tasks when attached to construction squadrons due to the complex nature of their tasks, heavy machinery and plant equipment. At both the tactical and operational levels, the approach to this Talisman Sabre has been to take lessons out of the Russia-Ukraine conflict (importance of dispersion, lines of communication, force protection, mobility, cam and concealment and synchronisation of logistics) and demonstrate them in a practical setting

CAPT Chaitanya Gunturi
Troop Commander
Operational Support Squadron
6th Engineer Support Regiment

RAQ ANZAC DAY EVENTS ACROSS QUEENSLAND AND NORTHERN TERRITORY

ANZAC Day was commemorated in true RAQ style with events and activities held in Brisbane, Townsville and Toowoomba as well on the Sunshine Coast, some of which were supported financially by our busy association. The following potpourri of photos showing members and friends, young and old, supporting and enjoying time with mates, family and family friends at our regional marches, after-march events and get-togethers, including the ever popular two up games. More photos can be seen at <http://qld.raeme.org.au/> on the "Gallery" tab.

Brisbane





Townsville



ANZAC Day Buddina





Darwin



Editor's Note. I'd like to acknowledge the photographic contribution above from various RAQ organisations and unit correspondents and the ABC coverage of some of the above events.



Lunch Get-together at Alex Surf Club – 27 Jul 25.

After a bleak and wet night, the weather cleared to deliver a perfect winter's day on the Sunshine Coast. While only a few keen swimmers and surfers braved the pristine beach, the shimmering ocean provided a stunning backdrop for our second RAEME get-together at the Alex Surf Club.



Over 50 RAEME mates and their spouses attended what turned out to be an ideal luncheon in a truly picturesque setting. While many familiar faces from our April gathering were present, it was especially pleasing to welcome a number of new attendees, a reminder of what makes these gatherings so special. They offer an opportunity to reconnect with old mates and forge new friendships.



Following a hearty lunch and plenty of good conversation in the Bistro area, many retired to the adjacent games room, where stories and memories of times gone by continued.



All in all, another fantastic afternoon enjoyed by everyone.

Arte et Marte

Terry Johnson
RAEME Sunshine Coast Chapter
Mob: 0419759163



26th Annual South East Queensland Apprenticeship Reunion Bulimba Bowls Club.

Yes, it's still going! On Saturday 7th June 2025, approx. 80 Army Apprentices from the 2nd to 42nd Intakes, enjoyed the company of many other apprentices at the 26th Annual South East Qld reunion at the Bulimba Bowls Club. Many familiar faces were in attendance, and some not so familiar! It was a great turn out and a fantastic atmosphere – all in all, a great day. The Bulimba Bowls Club is a top venue and hosted our event very well.

Brian and Barb Daley continue to organise and run this popular event, but with a much lower commitment. This year there was no sausage sizzle, defaulting to feeding everyone with pizzas – 60 pizzas were enjoyed by those in attendance.

For the statisticians amongst you, the 32nd Intake was the most in attendance on the day. The highlight was Keith Fox, who came from Macleay Island in Moreton Bay. Keith is a 2nd Intake Vehicle Mechanic, and although on a “walker”, he manages very well, and he enjoyed the day immensely. He also confirmed that he is a member of the Apprentices Association, but he has experienced trouble getting onto the AAAA website, as he is not that computer literate. At 96 years young, that is understandable!! We are looking at assisting him with this problem.



Keith Fox, 2nd Intake and Ty Bodle, 44th Intake VM, the oldest and youngest intakes represented



Attendees Gather on the Deck of the Bulimba Bowling Club



The next oldest group flanking Keith and Ty, many of the 14th Intake attendees



L to R: Pete Matthews, 37th VM, Greg Burke, 38th VM, Simon Brooks, 40th VM, Tony Bell 30th VM, Richard Legge, 37th VM



Final act for the day – Blip Hendricks, (25th VM) lowering the Apprentices Flag

Regards,

**Brian Daley (14th VM)
Reunion Convenor
Mobile 0412 721 761**



COMING EVENTS

Annual All Ranks Gold Coast Lunch – Mermaid Beach AEME Surf Club.

This year the annual lunch will be held on the **Saturday the 23rd of August** at the Mermaid Beach (AEME) Surf Life Saving Club located on Hedges Avenue Mermaid Beach.

The lunch will be from 1200 hrs to approximately 1600 hrs in the usual format with the club allocating guests an area on the veranda overlooking the ocean. Guests are invited to purchase their own lunch and drinks; however the RAQ will subsidise some drinks.

As normal, and befitting the Gold Coast, the lunch is a laid-back affair with casual dress and is designed for a good catch up for all. Everyone is welcome wives, girlfriends, boyfriends, etc.

Just a reminder that the **Surf Club offers free Life Membership for financial members of the RAQ**. This is a fantastic offer and if you have not taken advantage of this just go to the RAQ website and all will be revealed.

Regards,

Eddie “Beans” Bevans
Convenor
Gold Coast Lunch



RAQ Darling Downs Events.

Remaining functions this year are:

- Event No 3/25 - 17 Aug (VV Day function)
- Event No 4/25 - 16 Nov (RAEME Birthday function)

I'm also considering an informal outdoor (BYO) BBQ in Queens Park in September, to take advantage of the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers displays. I'll ask the Function Coord at the August event for a show of hands and decide and advise accordingly.

Arte et Marte

Peter Pile
Darling Downs
Events Convenor



RAEME AEME / ARES Annual Reunion Invitation – 2025. The Annual RAEME Reunion is open to all serving and ex-members of RAEME (Army Reserve/CMF or Regular Army), members of associated Corps who served with RAEME Reserve/CMF units, their families, and anyone who was connected with RAEME and would like to renew old friendships.

Ex-cadre staff members are especially welcome. If you know of anyone who may be interested but unaware of the event, please pass this information on.

 **Date:** Sunday, 17th August 2025.

 **Time:** 1100 hrs – 1600 hrs.

 **Location:** Sherwood/Indooroopilly RSL Sub Branch 2 Clewley Street, CORINDA (next to Corinda Railway Station).

- **Cost: \$5/person** – includes BBQ lunch, with drinks available at bar prices.
- **Time** – 1100-1600 hrs.
- **Great Raffle Prizes** – including books, wine, gift vouchers (\$100, \$50, \$20) and more!
- **RSVP** – We look forward to seeing you there so RSVP by 10 August 2025 for catering purposes.
- **Memorabilia** – Bring your photos to share.

John Parfitt
iparfitt@bigpond.net.au
(07) 3376 1778

RAQ Sunshine Coast All Ranks Annual Luncheon – Saturday 13 Sep 25.

Readers are advised that the 2025 RAQ Sunshine Coast Chapter Annual Luncheon is to be held at the Maroochy RSL on Saturday 13 September.

It is anticipated that the past Colonel Commandant, Queensland, Colonel Steve Evans (Rtd) will introduce his successor, COL Piers Cambridge CSM, who will talk about his recent career in AHQ, and his plans for engaging with soldiers in Queensland.

The RSL will offset the cost of the lunch to the sum of \$10.00 per head for the first 80 attendees. At this time the RAQ has also agreed to sponsor RAQ members and 1 guest at \$20.00 per member attending and a request for Maroochy RSL to sponsor has been submitted. Subject to Maroochy RSL sponsorship being approved we anticipate a cost of \$32 per member and 1 guest at \$32.

Details confirming the menu, format and timings will be promulgated later in the year. **Please note Saturday 13 September 2025, in your diary** and we look forward to seeing you once again on the Sunny Coast.

This year, the convenors are looking at some more casual events in differing venues. The last “pay-as-you-go-luncheons” will be held on 23 Nov 25 at either Maroochy or Alex Surf Clubs.

Look out for further detail on these events.

Arte et Marte

Terry and Tom

Terry Johnson & Tom Regener



Co-convenors
Sunshine Cost Events

The following social events are planned for later in 2025 in and around Queensland.

Event	Date
RAQ Darling Downs Luncheon - Toowoomba	Sun 17 Aug 25
Reserve/CMF Reunion - Sherwood/Indooroopilly RSL	Sun 17 Aug 25
RAQ Gold Coast Luncheon - Mermaid Beach AEME SLSC	Sat 23 Aug 25
RAQ Sunshine Coast Luncheon – Maroochy RSL	Sat 13 Sep 25
RAQ Darling Downs Luncheon - Toowoomba	Sun 16 Nov 25
RAQ Women in RAEME (WIR) Cocktails - Gaythorne RSL	Fri 28 Nov 25
RAQ Sunshine Coast Gathering	TBA Nov 25
All Ranks Luncheon Brisbane	30 Nov 2025
RAEME 83rd Birthday	Mon 1 Dec 25

For further details on Events please contact the [Functions Office](#) .To view all functions happening around Australia by the Associations [Click on this link](#)

SPANNER PACK CONTINUES ITS GOOD WORK – JULY UPDATE.

This is my second article for Spanner News since I took over the role of the RAEME National Network Spanner Pack Coordinator. I would like to thank the committee from the RAEME Association Queensland (RAQ) for their support and encouragement. It has been an interesting period, with many small requests for Spanner Packs for Bluebell detachments that have deployed on various operations and activities throughout the northern approaches of Australia.

It is great to support RAEME with the recent requests; however, we can do more to support. I would like to ask all unit and formation ASMs, Workshop commanders and RAEME S4s to further assist the association in supporting your soldiers/craftsmen when they are deployed overseas. I feel that the RAEME Association at times does not have adequate situational awareness of when there are RAEME elements deployed, and we rely on unit ASMs and workshop commanders being proactive and forwarding a request for Spanner Packs to the association.

I would like to highlight that the RAEME Association will provide Spanner Packs globally for any RAEME maintenance, training/mentoring detachments, or individual embeds - such as officers or other ranks on UN or coalition postings. Generally, if the training activity is longer than two or three months, we would like to provide those soldiers with a care package, just to let them know the association is thinking of them, their dedication to service to the Army, whether it is warlike,

non-warlike or an overseas training activity. Ultimately, we want to see the safe return of those deployed overseas back to Australia to be with their families, friends and the RAEME Corps.

In March, 106 Field Workshop, 7 CSSB provided instructors for a PMVM Basic Maintenance Course, with LT Bec Rasmussen as the contingent commander of EX CORAL SUSTAINER 2025. An additional Spanner Pack was also gifted to MAJ Christopher Court who is currently an ADF Embed in Fiji. As was then, and as reported previously in the RAQ Friday Files weekly emails, the Spanner packs were well received and appreciated.



LCPL Jackson Brough, LT Bec Rasmussen, CPL Aaron Primavera.

In May, WO2 David Shepherd and MAJ Matt Scanlon, both posted to the Defence Co-operation Program (DCP) PNG, requested, and later assisted in delivering, Spanner Packs to a RAEME detachment from 3 CER that were in Lae and surrounding areas for EXERCISE PUK PUK 2025. Various RAEME personnel and an attached welder from the Royal New Zealand Army Logistic Regiment (RNZALR) were cycled throughout the exercise from April through to July.



L to R: L/CPL Todd Kitching - ECN 418, CPL Ben Woodhouse - ECN 146, LT Rhys Brown -S4, CFN Angus Frost - ECN 146, CFN Jakob Vickers - ECN 229, CPL Terrence Gordon - ECN 229



L to R: CPL Ben Woodhouse, CFN Jakob Vickers, L/CPL Todd Kitching, L/CPL Joseph Reaney -RNZALR welder, CFN Angus Frost

On one recovery task, CFN Vickers went to Wewak twice to successfully recover an ADF Roller, Grader and a G Wagon that had remained in PNG since last year's EXERCISE PUK PUK 2024.

It was observed by the DCP staff, all RAEME members from 3 CER did an outstanding job during the exercise from all feedback received. They were able to assimilate well with the local PNGDF units and were able to aid and provide guidance to the PNGDF engineer battalion personnel as well as the PNGDF tradesmen scattered throughout Lae and Wewak area. A fantastic effort from some of the younger tradesmen in the Corps.

During the February to June, MTT-A had a RAEME detachment from 3rd Bn RAR Workshop Platoon. The two RAEME tradesmen assisted the delivery of courses to the PNGDF.



CPL Michael Miller, CFN Jordan Stevens gifted their Spanner Packs from WO2 David Shepherd, Workshop Logistic Advisor, DCP

Additional Spanner Packs have been sent to a RAEME CPL on OPERATION SOVEREIGN BOARDERS. As well as AACAP 2025, 6 ESR requested for 6 spanner packs for a RAEME detachment supporting AACAP in the Torres Strait Islands. They are deployed to Warraber

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and Erub Islands. I recommend you search the locations on Google Maps; they are in the middle of the ocean between Australia and PNG.

If you would like to request a Spanner Pack, please go to RAEME Association Queensland website, qld.raeme.org.au and go to the Contact Us tab at the top of the home page and email the Spanner Pack Co-ordinator. Or email directly to: spannerpack@qld.raeme.org.au

For more information about Operation Spanner Pack or donation details to support this great cause, go to RAEME Association Queensland website, select About Us page and select the Operation Spanner Pack link. The more we receive the more our soldiers will benefit.

Arte et Marte

Major (Rtd) Tom Cross
RNN Spanner Pack Co Coordinator
RNN@qld.raeme.org.au



VALE

It is with deep regret we advise of the following deaths amongst the members our Corps:

- **Ludlow**, Major (RTD) Robert Francis Ludlow (13th Elec Mech, OCS Dec 1963) passed away on 2 Apr 25 at John Flynn Hospital Tugun, Gold Coast, aged 82 years. Bob served with 106 Field Workshop SVN from 5 Nov 1969 to 18 July 1970. He attended Army Staff College in 1977. Bob resigned from the army in 1978 to join Mayne Nickless, subsequently rising to become Deputy CEO of Australia Post for 10 years, retiring in 2000. He will be sadly missed by his Appy and OCS classmates and many friends.
- **Bolton**, David (Dave), (37th Elec Fit) late of Tannum Sands, passed away on Friday 4 Apr 25, aged 60 years. Dave graduated for AAS in 1983. Dave's Funeral Service was held 1st May 25.
- **Hall**, WO1 (RTD) Alan Leslie (Art), passed away 10 Apr 25, after a courageous battle with lung cancer. Alan was a highly respected member of the Corps, known for his technical expertise, leadership, and dedication, particularly within the RAEME Aviation community. Much of his distinguished career was spent at Oakey, where he left a lasting impression on those who served alongside him. In accordance with Alan's wishes, there was no funeral.
- **Terry**, Howard Graham, passed away on 17 May 25, aged 78 years, following a battle with cancer. Howard was a National Serviceman, who served in Vietnam with C Squadron, 1st Armoured Regiment from 14 Jan 1969 to 10 Feb 1969 and then B Squadron, 1st Armoured II Feb 1969 to 14 Jan 1970. Funeral was held on 29th May in South Australia
- **Willing**, Brent William, passed away aged 79 – date not advised. Brent served in Vietnam with A Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment from 08 Feb 1967 to

21 Nov 1967. A service to honour Brent's life was held on 27th May at Graham Family Funeral Home, Hobart.

- **Allen**, Jeffrey Garfield (Jeff), passed away aged 78 on 22 June 25. He was a proud RAEME veteran and Vietnam War serviceman. Jeff was called up for National Service and trained at 2 RTB, Puckapunyal, before being allocated to RAEME. He went on to serve with 161 (Independent) Reconnaissance Flight in Vietnam as a mechanic from 16 April 1970 to 17 December 1970. No funeral details available.
- **Lockart**, WO1 (Rtd) Alan passed away on 11 Jul 25 at home in Bendigo Victoria. He was 85 years. No more detail available at time of publishing.

Ed Note: Above information supplied via Facebook.

WELFARE

RAQ has been advised of the following welfare case over the last four months.

- **Reardon**, Brian, advice received from the family indicates Brian has: *"finished radiation - he had treatment every day for 5 days in St Andrews Hospital in Toowoomba. He is due to have a scan to see if it's made any difference to the cancer and results are awaited."*

Veterans' Legislative Reform

Department of Veterans' Affairs Newsletter dated April 2025 provides important information on a major legislative reform initiative. The following summary comes directly from that new letter and the link below provides more detail. Entitled *"Creating a simpler, easier to use system for the veteran community. It points out in summary that:*

"The Government is committed to ensuring that Defence personnel, veterans and their families are well looked after.

"As highlighted by the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide in its [Interim Report](#), and fully supported by the Government, we are simplifying and harmonising the legislation that governs compensation and rehabilitation. This is so veterans and families can more easily get the support they are entitled to.

"On 13 February 2025, the Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2025 (VETS Act) was passed by Parliament.

"The new legislation means that from 1 July 2026, all compensation and rehabilitation claims will be determined under a single Act – the improved Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004 (MRCA)."

<https://www.dva.gov.au/about/royal-commission/veterans-legislation-reform>

Please Note. Please advise me via email address below, of any brothers and sisters, who have passed, or are in distress, in Queensland. Please ensure the detail provided is accurate and as complete as possible.

Arte et Marte

Barry Shipway
Welfare Officer

welfare@qld.raeme.org.au



RAEME HISTORY SEGMENT – GULF WAR EXPERIENCES 2003-2009

CAPT Alison Lee, a RAEME aeronautical engineer served with the coalition on exchange posting with the US Army in the Second Gulf War. During 2001, CAPT Lee was posted to an exchange posting with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Scheduled to leave Australia on 11 September 2001, CAPT Lee's departure was delayed when major terrorist attacks took place in New York and Washington. These attacks were to add a new and dangerous element to the immediate future.

CAPT Lee's US Army posting was to the 8th Battalion, 101st Aviation Maintenance Regiment, of the 101st Airborne Division, where she held the appointment of Production Control Officer, a role very similar to RAEME's EMEOPSO. Alison's initial time in this posting was uneventful, but in February 2002, the unit began to prepare to deploy to Kuwait in preparation for the subsequent war in Iraq.

"It was fantastic professional opportunity to be involved in the deployment of a US Division (approx 25,000 personnel) and its equipment half-way across the world. A majority of the Division's land-based equipment (e.g. vehicles and artillery) was moved by train to the Port of Jacksonville, Florida. Fort Campbell has an integral railhead that is capable of loading 11 flatbed trains simultaneously, 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The sheer volume of equipment that passed through these facilities in the lead up to the deployment was phenomenal.



Flight line at Udairi, Kuwait in March 2003

"The Division's aircraft (approximately 300) were flown to Jacksonville to prepare for embarkation. In most cases blades were removed and the aircraft wrapped in plastic (similar to

a Steggles chicken) before being lifted onboard a merchant freighter to be tied down for the sea voyage. In all the Division utilised five merchant vessels to transport all its equipment and immediate stores to Kuwait.

"Personnel moved to Kuwait via chartered 747s from Fort Campbell to Germany and then onto Kuwait. We spent approximately three weeks in Kuwait rebuilding aircraft, being briefed and awaiting final directions. On the day of crossing the border into Iraq, we were up at 0200 hours to head to the flight line and commence the loading of Hellfire rockets and 30mm ammunition. The sheer number of helicopters on this flight line was amazing. There were seven Battalions of Apache aircraft alone! After the aircraft departed, we got vehicles and stores ready for departure the next day.



Convoy preparing to depart Kuwait for Iraq, March 2003. The orange panels are to identify us as US forces and hopefully stop our own aircraft from attacking us)

"The trip through Iraq was one I will not forget. The first day, we drove in a convoy of approximately 300 vehicles for about 16 hours before stopping for the night in a secure refuelling area. We then continued onto an established maintenance location known as Shell. It was a strange feeling knowing you are in a hostile country, in a remote desert location, with nobody other than the personnel and vehicles of your own Company.



Members of Charlie Company, 8-101st Aviation Maintenance Battalion preparing for yet another move in Iraq.

"At this stage we had separated from the rest of the convoy and were now on our own, a group approximately 300 personnel and 80 vehicles, under command of a Major and in support of 154 aircraft of six different variants.

"After a few days at this location we moved to another remote desert location and within about 30 minutes of our arrival there, our supported units began to arrive (I'm not sure how they found us as we didn't know where we were) with parts for repair and orders for replacement parts. During our short stay here the unit was involved in a number of recovery missions to retrieve aircraft involved in incidents (mostly due to brownouts).



This US Army Apache was recovered and returned to the US for rebuild. The state of this aircraft is typical of many recovered and later transported to the US by strategic air via Kuwait.

"After about a week we moved again to an old airport at Ishkandariah, a little south of Baghdad and home for three weeks. At this site, were other units and we were able to access mail from home and shower tents. I was also fortunate to have the opportunity to visit the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and the Babylonian Lion. Our final move was from Ishkandariah to Queariahsome, north of Baghdad, where we established a firm base and remained for some months.

"This old Iraqi base had been damaged significantly during the first Gulf War and the destruction remained clearly evident. At this base, the unit completed a number of deeper level servicing on all variants of aircraft, a real achievement given the location and constraints we were under due to logistics and our ability to receive resupply."

Arte et Marte

Ross Grant
Spanner News
History Editor



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

This edition is a little biased towards the aviation RAEME capability with many structural changes underway in that capability, but also in Townsville and Oakey – it warms this editor's heart to see these positive changes, given my

early background supporting Army aviation for many years. But in the next edition, I hope to feature the RAEME Ground capability and units, which are also undergoing significant change and restructuring not only in Townsville, but also in Darwin, and elsewhere. So if you have a story about your unit, and the good work underway to better support the ADF, across Australia, then send them to the RAQ for publication.

On the future of “Spanner News”, in the next edition, I hope to report some changes being planned for our many communications platforms. In discussions with the Chair RAQ, Pete Matthews, we have agreed to fold “Spanner News” into his wonderful and very popular “Friday Files” newsletter and broaden its scope – you may have already seen an increase in historical accounts, which have been added in recent months. We’d like a sound balance in future editions of timely and current stories complemented by some interesting historical accounts, which are the essence of our Corps’ well-deserved reputation.

So let loose your unit correspondents and RAEME associations’ correspondents and find and despatch stories. You can send them to commschair@qld.raeme.org.au each week and they will be included.

While this work is underway, I have asked the Secretary of the RA ACT, Ian Cook, if he would look at developing a national newsletter, in collaboration with the various associations in the RAEME National Network (RNN), which would feature stories from their perspective, but for national consumption. This initiative will connect the family more effectively – you may have already seen Ian Cook’s “RAEME in ACTION” newsletter, which is a content rich document published monthly. Have a look at the various editions at this link:

<https://act.raeme.org.au/index.php/publications/monthly-newsletters>

Finally, with so RAEME and other logistic units and sub-units involved in EX TALISMAN SABRE, there must be many interesting stories which could be provided for the next edition of Spanner News in October 2025. Please offer them to me, or the Chair of RAQ, Peter Matthews for publication at: chairman@qld.raeme.org.au

Finally, I’d like to offer my congratulations to the large number of RAEME recipients for their awards resulting from the Kings Birthday Honours, and other important appointments in this edition of Spanner News. Well done all, and for our younger readers, these are the people who reinforce our Corps reputation – something to aspire to!

Ross Grant
Chairman Comms Committee
commschair@qld.raeme.org.au



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13 1905 > racq.com/batteries

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RAEME Association Queensland – What we are about?

The purpose of the RAEME Association Queensland is to promote and reinforce the spirit, reputation and image of the Corps through its past, present and future members.

The goals of the RAEME Association Queensland (RAQ) locally are to:

- promote the Corps' identity and reputation,
- recognise and celebrate achievements of members of the Corps, and
- provide a focal point for Corps activities.

To gain RAQ membership benefits, join for \$10/year, or upgrade to Life Subscription for \$100. All proceeds support and promote the goals of the Association.

The **Veterans Heart Health Program**, proudly funded by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and managed nationally by Corporate Health Management (CHM), offers a 12-month health and fitness journey at absolutely no cost to you! It's FREE! See detail at: <https://www.veteranshearthealth.com.au/eligibility/>

RAEME CORPS SHOP

"WITH SKILL AND FIGHTING: CRAFTSMEN OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY 1942-2014".

For those yet to buy the Corps memoir, there are still copies available, detailed below is how to obtain a copy. It may be a great gift for someone who has served in the Corps.

Books are only \$40.00 plus postage. Copies can be ordered from the Corps Shop, which is available on the RAEME National Website

(<https://raeme.org.au>). Whilst on the site why not check out the other items available.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to drop us a line at

RAEME.HOCCell@defence.gov.au

Please be patient, there are only a couple of Defence Members in the HOC Cell and they have other tasks.